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THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD, A HANDBOOK FOR BOARDS OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS AND TEACHERS OF AGRICULTURE.

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DESCRIPTORS- *ADVISORY COMMITTEES, *VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE, MEETINGS, SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP, ACTIVITIES, RESPONSIBILITY, NEW YORK,

THE PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK IS TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL IN MAKING THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARDS IN THE ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS. IT CONTAINS INFORMATION ON (1) PROCEDURES FOR FORMING NEW AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARDS OR REORGANIZING OLD ONES INCLUDING WHERE TO START, WHO SHOULD SERVE, AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS, (2) WAYS AND MEANS FOR THEIR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE OPERATION INCLUDING ORGANIZING NEW AND ONGOING BOARDS AND CONDUCTING MEETINGS, AND (3) TYPES OF ACTIVITIES IN WHICH SUCH BOARDS MIGHT ENGAGE INCLUDING THOSE RELATED TO SCHOOL POLICY, PROGRAM PLANNING, EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE ROLE OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD, ITS PURPOSES, NORMAL CHANNELS OF AUTHORITY AND COMMUNICATION, FUNCTIONS, AND ADAPTATIONS FOR BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ARE DISCUSSED. (WB)

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THE AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD

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A Handbook

for

Boards of Education, School Administrators

Advisory Board Members

and

Teachers of Agriculture

VT 02031

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
ALBANY, 1965

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The State Education Department
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Albany
1966

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FOREWORD

Agricultural advisory boards have had a prominent role in the organization and development of agricultural education programs at the local school level from the time the first departments were established at the turn of the century. Advice given to boards of education relative to the planning and operation of agricultural programs has been invaluable in developing high quality agricultural education throughout the State.

This handbook has been prepared as a guide to boards of education, school administrators and teachers of agriculture to assist them in capitalizing on the most effective use of these boards. The operational procedures and responsibilities suggested should help advisory boards to function effectively and be of maximum assistance in a community.

Changes in the character of New York agriculture have created an increased need for the sound advice of agriculture advisory boards in planning for agricultural education programs. Agriculture is not only concerned with the production and marketing of food and fiber, but also consists of a complex of off-the-farm agricultural occupations including those in agricultural sales and services, the production and use of ornamental plants, the field of agricultural mechanization, and in conservation and forestry. The organization of agricultural programs with two or more schools obtaining instruction through a board of cooperative educational services has further increased the need for a good understanding of the ways in which advisory boards should operate to be of greatest service.

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The members of an agricultural advisory board provide invaluable advice not readily available from other sources. The teacher of agriculture on the extreme left and the school administrator on the extreme right are discussing an issue with the local agricultural advisory board.

INTRODUCTION

Local agricultural advisory boards have long been an important feature of vocational agriculture programs in New York State. Over the years teachers of agriculture, school administrators and boards of education have realized many benefits from the advice of their advisory boards. Some of the advantages frequently cited by those who have worked effectively with local agricultural advisory boards are:

- They provide an opportunity for people engaged in farming and agricultural occupations off the farm to work with school personnel in developing a program of vocational agriculture adapted to their particular community.
- They contribute invaluable advice not readily available from other sources.
- They constitute an excellent means of communication between the school and those citizens engaged in agricultural occupations within the community.
- They create interest in and furnish support for the vocational agriculture program among people in the community.
- They have a significant public relations potential.
- They encourage and assist the teacher of agriculture to do a more effective job.
- They can be of real assistance in preserving the continuity of the vocational agriculture program when there is a change of teachers.

The benefits to be derived from agricultural advisory boards are recognized by a regulation of the Commissioner of Education, which currently reads, "An advisory board of five members must be appointed, representing the dominant agricultural activities of the region."

The purpose of this handbook is to provide three types of service to boards of education, high school administrators, teachers of agriculture and members of local agricultural advisory boards: (1) to suggest procedures for forming new boards or reorganizing old ones; (2) to suggest ways and means for their efficient and effective operation, and (3) to illustrate the types of activities in which such boards might engage.

THE ROLE OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Purpose

The purpose of the agricultural advisory board is to advise the board of education, the school administrator and the teacher of agriculture regarding the vocational agriculture program.

Members of advisory boards must always keep in mind that their role is advisory and that their recommendations fall in the category of suggestions to those persons charged with administration of the vocational agriculture program.

Normal Channels of Authority and Communication

Authority to operate the schools within a given school district lies with the local board of education. This body is elected by the local voters and is in turn responsible to them. Within the limits imposed by state government, the local board is responsible for such things as: determining what program of studies will be offered by the school, budgeting and spending school money, employing school personnel, providing services to pupils such as transportation and school lunches, establishing the school year and many other matters. Local boards make policy decisions concerning the matters within their jurisdiction but leave the implementation of much of this policy to their chief executive officer, the school administrator.

The school administrator administers the school in accordance with the policies of the local board of education and the Board of Regents. When problems arise which involve the making of new policy, the school administrator refers such problems to the local board of education for decision.

The teacher of agriculture is a regular member of the teaching staff and is responsible to the school administrator as are all teachers. Problems concerning the vocational agriculture program are taken to the school administrator by the teacher of agriculture. If the problem is operational in nature, it is solved in a manner which is consistent with existing policy. If the school administrator believes that a new policy decision is needed he may choose to take the problem to the board of education.

Functions of the Local Agricultural Advisory Board

The local agricultural advisory board performs three functions:

1. *It studies problems referred to it by the board of education and makes recommendations.*

The board of education is called upon from time to time to study problems involving policy decisions which have been referred to it through the normal administrative channels. In some cases, the board of education may choose to make a policy decision and settle the matter forthwith. In other situations, it may refer such problems to the agricultural advisory board for study and recommendation. Since the advisory board is well informed on agricultural matters and is a representative group, it is in a position to serve a useful function in this respect.

2. *It suggests the establishment of, or the revision of policy on its own initiative.*

On occasion the advisory board will in its deliberations sense the need for the establishment of, or revision of existing policies. When this occurs, it is recommended that the suggestions of the board be forwarded through the teacher of agriculture and the school administrators to the board of education. As explained above, only the board of education can establish policy or revise existing policies. There are occasions, however, when the need for such action by the board of education is not apparent to that body and suggestions should be welcomed from the agricultural advisory board.

3. *It assists the teacher of agriculture and/or the school administrator in solving operational problems when requested.*

Frequently the teacher of agriculture and/or the school administrator find it helpful to seek the advice of agriculturists in the solution of problems of an operational nature. In such cases the problem and full information concerning it might be referred directly to the advisory board for study. The advice of the advisory board in this situation would be likewise referred directly back to the teacher or school administrator.

Adaptations for Boards of Cooperative Educational Services

When two or more schools which presently offer vocational agriculture are considering obtaining their agricultural instruction through a board of cooperative educational services, it is strongly advised that a joint meeting of the several agricultural advisory boards from the schools involved study the feasibility of this arrangement and make recommendations to their respective boards of education.

Where two or more schools have entered into an agreement to obtain agricultural instruction from such a cooperative board, it is recommended that one agricultural advisory board be formed representing the school districts served. In such a case each participating school district should designate persons to serve on the advisory board. Meetings might be held either on a rotating basis at the schools served or at a central point.

In establishing lines of authority and communication for agricultural advisory boards appointed by a board of cooperative educational services the cooperative board becomes the board of education and the administrator of the cooperative board is the school administrator.

In instances where instruction in agricultural education is offered as a part of the program of an area vocational center, an advisory board should be constituted to advise the board of cooperative educational services or other agency which provides the service. Membership on the advisory board should represent not only the geographic area served but also the specialized course offerings provided.

An Agricultural Advisory Committee as Part of a Larger Vocational Advisory Board

In larger school districts or in area vocational centers where a variety of programs in trade and technical, business and distributive, home economics, agricultural and other vocational educational fields are offered the board of education or board of cooperative educational services may choose to establish an advisory board to advise it on all matters relating to vocational education. Such a group may be rather large in number and, if so, may be sub-divided into several smaller committees, one or more representing each of the specialized vocational education fields. In such cases an

agricultural advisory committee should be formed and serve the same general functions as an agricultural advisory board. The committee members should either all be members of the larger vocational advisory board or should have representation on that board. Usually in such cases, the bulk of the advisory services are performed by the smaller committee and recommendations to the administration are forwarded through the larger vocational advisory board. The smaller advisory committee would ordinarily meet more frequently than the larger board and should be composed of persons intimately familiar with the predominant agricultural activity of the area.

The Advisory Board Works As A Group

The recommendations of the agricultural advisory board should result from group deliberation during the course of called meetings. Normally, a minimum of four regular meetings should be scheduled for the year, preferably one during each season. One of the meetings annually should include a reorganization of the board and evaluation of the program. In addition, special meetings should be called as needed.

PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING

Where to Start

The school administrator advises the board of education of the Commissioner's Regulation respecting the formation of an advisory board and recommends the establishment of such a board locally. The board of education adopts a resolution to this effect, afterwhich the main business of forming an agricultural advisory board can proceed.

Who Should Serve

In order for the agricultural advisory board to serve as a means of communication between the vocational agriculture department and the citizens to be served, it is important that membership be representative of those persons engaged in farming and in off-the-farm agricultural occupations withing the community. In this connection there should be members who are representatives of:

. Geographical sections of the school district.
. The predominant types of farming in the school district.
. Farm owners, tenants and farm laborers.
. Parents of vocational agriculture students.
. Former vocational agriculture students.
. Agricultural occupations off-the-farm.
. Various age levels.
. Various educational levels.

This sort of representation should enable the local agricultural advisory board to reflect the points of view held by important segments of the population served by the agriculture department. However, individual members are not encouraged to think of themselves as protectors of rights or vested interests held by the population groupings of which they are representative. Rather they should consider the best interests of the entire district or area being served.

A second major consideration in deciding who should serve lies in the area of personal qualifications. Some of the more obvious qualities which it would be desirable for all members to demonstrate are:

. A reputation for integrity and good character.
. Willingness to serve.
. Adequate available time.
. Interest in vocational agriculture.
. Confidence of associates.
. Abiltiy to make a contribution.

It is recommended that a member of the board of education, preferably a person interested in agriculture, be designated to serve on the agricultural advisory board. Dual membership in this case may result in closer liaison and better understanding between the two boards. It may be advisable for the member of the board of education who is designated to serve on the advisory board to also serve in a consulting and non-voting status. This would prevent this person from being in the occasionally uncomfortable position of voting on a recommendation at the advisory board meeting and then having to act upon it as a member of the board of education.

In addition, the teacher of agriculture and the school administrator should serve as consulting members. They should be in attendance at all meetings to provide information and to participate in discussions and should be non-voting members of the group.

Appointment of Members

It is advisable that the agricultural advisory board become a continuing body with a majority of its membership composed of experienced persons. This can be achieved by initially appointing some members for one year, some for two years and others for three-year terms. Thereafter, all members should be appointed for not less than a three year term, nor more than a five year term. Normally it is not advisable for members to serve two consecutive full terms since this forestalls the bringing in of new persons who presumably would have new ideas. However, special circumstances might, on occasion, justify continuation of some members beyond the normal period of service.

The most widely used procedure for nominating members is for the teacher of agriculture and school administrator to recommend a list of possible nominees to the board of education. Sometimes in the case of an existing advisory board the board prepares the list of nominees for the consideration of the board of education. The board in turn selects and appoints each member of the advisory board for a specific term, after determining his willingness to serve. Appointments to the advisory board are frequently made at the annual organizational meeting of the board of education along with other appointments.

Notice of appointment should be made by letter from the board of education stating the term for which appointment is made and, when appropriate, specifying the person who will call the organization meeting. Enclosure of this publication, or similar material prepared locally, would give the new member additional insight into his duties and responsibilities as a member of the local agricultural advisory board.

A record of the years of service of present and past advisory board members should be maintained by both the vocational agricultural teacher and the board of education.

PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS

The Organization Meeting for a New Board

The first meeting of a newly appointed agricultural advisory board should be devoted to the orientation of members and program planning. It is logical that the teacher of agriculture and the school administrator should assume joint responsibility for conducting this first meeting. Some of the items to be included on the agenda are:

- Call to order by the teacher of agriculture or the school administrator acting as a temporary chairman.
- Explanation by the school administrator of the purpose, typical activities and how an advisory board functions in connection with the vocational agriculture program.
- Description of the vocational agriculture program by the teacher of agriculture.
- Presentation by the president of the board of education or other members of that body of problems in connection with which help is needed.
- Determination of place, dates, hour and length of regular meetings.
- Selection of one or more problems to be discussed at the next meeting.
- Election of a chairman for a one-year term from the appointed members.
- Election of a secretary for a one-year term. In some instances the teacher of agriculture may serve as secretary to facilitate the keeping and duplication of minutes, arranging for meetings, and other necessary tasks.

The Annual Organization for an On-Going Board

The annual organization meeting for an on-going board should be held as soon after July 1 as feasible. If the board has been relatively active less attention need be placed on orientation of members and more attention should be given to planning the activities to be engaged in during the year. Furthermore, leadership for the meeting should come from the chairman with the teacher of agriculture and school administrator serving as resource persons. In addition to routine matters, the following items would typically be included in the program for the annual organization meeting for an on-going agricultural advisory board:

- Call to order by the chairman.
- Report by the teacher of the year's accomplishments in vocational agriculture.
- Report by the school administrator on those policy problems about which the board of education would welcome recommendations.
- Report by the teacher of agriculture concerning operational problems with which advice is needed.
- Determination of place, dates, hours and length of regular meetings for the coming year.
- Planning of the program for the year.
- Election of a chairman for one-year term.
- Election of a secretary for a one-year term.

Conduct of Meetings

The chairman should assume responsibility for preparing the agenda well in advance of each meeting. He should contact the secretary, the teacher of agriculture and the school administrator in order to make sure that no important matter is omitted. In determining the order in which items will appear on the agenda the chairman should observe the following, or a similar, order of business:

1. Review of the minutes of the previous meeting.
2. Committee reports.
3. Teachers report.
4. Unfinished business.
5. Communications.
6. New business.
7. Suggestions from members for improving the program.
8. Reading and approving of minutes.

When the agenda has been determined the chairman places it in the hands of the secretary who arranges for duplication of meeting notices. The secretary is normally responsible for mailing notices to members of the advisory board well in advance of meetings. The notice should include the agenda and any special materials which members will need to study in advance of the meeting, as well as the date, place and time.

Meetings of the agricultural advisory board are usually held in the vocational agriculture classroom with the teacher acting as host. Placing two or more of the classroom tables together to insure a compact conference-type

setting for meetings is advantageous. Placing a folder containing the minutes of previous meetings, the agenda and special materials needed for the current meeting on the table in front of each member's chair in advance of the meeting adds a business-like atmosphere to the setting.

The duties of the chairman during meetings include calling the meeting to order at the appointed time, presiding throughout the meeting and adjourning at the agreed-on hour. Meetings should be conducted in a business-like manner using parliamentary procedure and observing the order of business established by the agenda. Recommendations and advice should be supported by a majority of the advisory board members.

The chairman may appoint one or more members to represent the advisory board at certain functions or to perform certain tasks. Likewise, he might appoint committees to work on problems needing special study. However, since the agricultural advisory board is typically a small group it is usually practical for them to work as a committee of the whole.

The secretary keeps the minutes of all meetings. He also is responsible for getting the minutes duplicated and distributed promptly to regular and consulting members, the president of the board of education and the superintendent of schools.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Attempts to improve any school program will in the long run succeed or fail to the degree that the people served by the program participate in and support it. In the case of vocational agriculture, capable and representative persons engaged in farming and off-the-farm agricultural occupations should be constantly involved in many phases of the program, including recommending policies, program planning, evaluation and improvement of instruction and public relations. The examples cited below are only a few of the ways in which agricultural advisory boards can, when requested, lend their influence to aid the program in vocational agriculture to meet its objectives.

Activities Related to School Policy for Vocational Agriculture

- Consider problems referred by the board of education and make recommendations.

- Advise the teacher of agriculture concerning problems arising from implementation of school policy as requested.

Activities in Connection with Program Planning for Vocational Agriculture

- Consider the agricultural courses which may be offered in grades 7 through 12 from among the possible sequences and recommend those which should be taught.
- Study the need for programs to serve out-of-school youth and adults and recommend ways in which such programs may be implemented.
- Review and suggest content for courses of study in agricultural subjects which are essential to becoming successfully engaged in farming and off-the-farm agricultural occupations.
- Provide guidance to the teacher of agriculture in selecting and scheduling the activities to be included in his annual program of work including his summer program.

Activities Related to Evaluation and Improvement of Instruction

- Recommend minimum standards for student agricultural work experience programs.
- Suggest suitable farms where non-farm boys can obtain farm experience for their training for farming occupations.
- Suggest suitable agricultural firms and agencies where students can obtain appropriate agricultural work experiences for training in the off-the-farm agricultural occupations.
- Study purposes and recommended standards concerning instruction conducted on farms and in other places where agricultural work experiences are provided.
- Discuss problems encountered by the teacher in advising the FFA Chapter and recommend solutions.
- Suggest suitable farms and other agricultural firms and agencies for field trips.
- Evaluate the adequacy of the physical facilities for vocational agriculture and recommend needed improvements to the board of education.
- Meet with the new teacher of agriculture soon after his arrival in the community for the purpose of orienting him to the local agricultural activity, the community and the vocational agriculture program.

Activities of a Public Relations Nature

. Help keep the general public informed about the program of vocational agriculture by:
  - Representing vocational agriculture in the community organizations to which they belong.
  - Making arrangements to have the teacher of agriculture appear on the programs of community organizations to explain the program of vocational agriculture.
  - Taking advantage of daily contacts with people in the community.

. Gain support for the vocational agriculture program by:
  - Assisting the teacher in encouraging organizations and agricultural agencies to stimulate development of vocational agriculture students' agricultural work experience programs through such means as providing livestock rings, awards, foundation stock, and other incentives.
  - Seeking instructional assistance for the teacher in the form of materials, consultants, demonstrations, land and equipment, when requested by the teacher.
  - Stimulating interest in joint ventures between the vocational agriculture department and community organizations.

. Keep the school informed of the reactions of the public to the vocational agriculture program.

. Serve as liaison agents between rural and urban interests.

. Advise the teacher in developing a public relations program for the vocational agriculture department.

Local conditions will, of course, dictate the specific activities in which a given board should engage at a given time.

FURTHER INFORMATION

In the event that further information or individual assistance is desired in connection with any aspect of agricultural advisory boards; members of such boards, school administrators, boards of education and teachers of agriculture are encouraged to contact the Bureau of Agricultural Education, State Department of Education, Albany, New York.